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FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

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Abstract: *This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as the domestic and international developments of Armenia in the period of August to December 2019. During this period, internal problems of the government increased significantly. On the one hand, domestic opposition assumed a stronger and more organized character. On the other hand, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict came to the fore and the Pashinyan government's indecisive and conflicting statements have further strengthened the international opinion that Armenia is the obstacle to a peaceful resolution and pressure has thus mounted on Armenia for it to make concessions. These developments have led the Pashinyan government, on the one hand, to open Armenia to international contacts and to introduce foreign relations as evidence of Armenia's success. On the other hand, with a view to garnering the potential of the Armenian Diaspora, the Government has undertaken a mission to gather all the Armenians around the World within a concept of Pan-Armenianism. The ever-present negative attitude and accusations against Turkey have further sharpened under these circumstances. Countering Turkey has become the benchmark for nationalistic credentials and adversity to Turkey has reached unprecedented levels.*

Keywords: *Nikol Pashinyan, Armenia-Turkey Relations, Nagorno-Karabakh, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, U.S. Congress*

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Öz: *Bu incelemede Ermenistan'ın iç ve dış dinamiklerinde ve Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinde Ağustos-Aralık 2019 ayları arasındaki gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır. Dönem içinde Paşinyan yönetiminin iç sıkıntıları artmıştır. Bir yandan iç muhalefet güçlenmiş ve örgütlenmeye başlamıştır. Diğer yandan Dağlık Karabağ çatışmasında Paşinyan hükümetinin kararsız ve çelişkili söylemler, sorunun çözümüne Ermenistan'ın engel olduğu anlayışını pekiştirmiş ve taviz vermesi baskısını artırmıştır. Bu gelişmeler çerçevesinde Paşinyan hükümeti, bir yandan Ermenistan'ı dışa açmış ve dış ilişkileri Ermenistan için bir başarı olarak gündeme taşımıştır. Diğer yandan ise Hükümet, Ermeni diasporasının potansiyelini elde etmek için tüm dünyadaki Ermenileri Pan-Ermenizm kavramı etrafında toplama misyonu edinmiştir. Türkiye'ye yönelik süregelen olumsuz tutum ve suçlamalar bu sıkıntılar altında daha da yoğunlaşmış, milliyetçilik kartında Türkiye karşıtlığı ölçü haline gelmiş ve daha önce görülmediği oranda artan bir Türkiye karşıtlığı ortaya çıkmıştır.*

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Nikol Paşinyan, Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri, Dağlık Karabağ, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, ABD Kongresi*

1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

In the second year of the Nikol Pashinyan administration coming to power, it started to be seen that optimistic discourses and promises have not been met, that an opposition led by Former President Robert Kocharyan, whose imprisonment continues despite attempts for his hearing and release, has started to become more alive. The opposition was also supported by the financial means of the son-in-law of previous President Serzh Sargsyan, former Vatican Ambassador Mikayel Minasyan.¹ The extremist and radically nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), with a past associated with terror activities and which was a coalition partner of the previous administrations, has also jumped on this opposition bandwagon. For a reprieve from his problems, Pashinyan has been in search of scapegoats to put the blame on domestic and foreign difficulties. The main domestic targets have been former regimes and the high-level bureaucracy and media outlet which he has declared to be still under the guidance of former powers. In this vein, on 5 December, an investigation was opened against former President S. Sargsyan on the grounds of abusing public funds.² Sargsyan is accused of embezzling 1 million US Dollars from the Armenian state in 2013. The charge was filed after Sargsyan took part in the EPP Congress in Zagreb in late November where he harshly criticized the government. He also boasted with his military role in the separatist war against Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. As a side note, back in June his brother, and in July his nephew were arrested on charges of embezzlement and corruption.

In the statement of the ARF Economic Bureau on 3 September, it was asserted that Armenia's economic indicators had dropped significantly in comparison with the previous year, refuting the declarations and statements of Pashinyan regarding the economy making significant progress. According to this statement, if in January-June 2019, the activity was 6.8%, then for the same period in 2018 it was 9.1%, exports for the first half of the year recorded a 0.5% decline, unemployment increased from 21% to 22%, and the resident population of the country decreased by 8,200.³ According to the report "Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia" released by the country's Statistical Committee (Armstat) in early December,⁴ in 2018, the poverty rate in Armenia

1 "Standoff Between Armenian Government and Former Regime Continues," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 19, 2019, <https://jamestown.org/program/standoff-between-armenian-government-and-former-regime-continues/>

2 "Ermenistan: Halk Protestoları Nedeniyle Görevi Bırakan Sarkisyan Hakkında Yolsuzluk Soruşturması," *EuroNews*, 5 Aralık 2019, <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/12/05/ermenistan-halk-protestolar-nedeniyle-gorevi-birakan-sarkisyan-hakkinda-yolsuzluk-sorustur>

3 "ARF-D: Armenian economic indicators this year are much lower compared to last year," *News.am*, September 3, 2019, <https://news.am/eng/news/531547.html>

4 "Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2018," *Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Armstat)*, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=2095>

was 23.5%, meaning that every fourth person in the country lived below the poverty line.

On 12 December, Russia's commercial representative to Armenia reaffirmed that Russia remains Armenia's main trading partner. Accordingly, in the January-September period, trade with Russia comprised 27% of Armenia's total turnover. The second largest trading partner of Armenia is China, followed by Switzerland, Germany, and Iran. In terms of investment, 43.6% of investments of the same period are made by Russian companies.

The Amulsar gold mining project, for which American and British companies obtained licenses and was halted by the local community's obstructing demonstrations, continued to become a problem: With a directive sent to the authorities on 4 September, Pashinyan instructed all the concerned government departments and institutions to work in a coordinated manner in order to provide a comprehensive analysis and complete data for further probe into the project.⁵ It was reflected in the press that Pashinyan met with Jirair Sefilyan, the leader of *Sasna Tsrer* (Daredevils of Sasun), which is a far-right Armenian party whose members had stormed a police station in Yerevan in 2016, killing three police officers. Regarding this issue, Sefilyan warned Pashinyan against giving the green light to the project and using force against the protestors.⁶

On 9 September, it was demanded in the parliament by Pashinyan's party group and forerunners of the party that the Parliament Speaker remove the Constitutional Court President from office. Pashinyan, who went even further on the same day, issued a statement in the press and expressed that the Constitutional Court President and two member judges had acted "illegally" due to their decisions on 4 September towards preventing Kocharyan's arrest.⁷

A prominent event of the period was the unexpected resignation on 16 September of Artur Vanetsyan, Director of the National Security Service, which is the country's all-powerful intelligence institution. In his resignation letter published in the media, Vanetsyan criticized the Pashinyan administration without giving names and stated "State-building has its logic: spontaneity of actions and decisions and a work style of not differentiating between primary and secondary and transient and lasting things is not the path leading to the realization of goals. Let my resignation be a sobering 'Stop'

5 "Pashinyan Again Meets Top Officials On Amulsar," *Azatutyun*, September 4, 2019, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/30146556.html>

6 "Pashinyan Raises Some Doubts on Amulsar but Presses Ahead," *Mirror Spectator*, September 12, 2019, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/09/12/pashinyan-raises-some-doubts-on-amulsar-but-presses-ahead/>

7 "PM called the Constitutional Court decision on ex-President Kocharyan's case 'unlawful'," *Panorama*, September 16, 2019, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2019/09/16/PM/2167394>

step,”⁸. The resignation was welcomed by the leaders of the former administration and the far-right. Pashinyan’s spokesperson implied that Vanetsyan was collaborating with the former administration and stated that there was the impression that his resignation letter was written by the former administration.⁹ The mutual arguments did not stop. During his visit to the United States (US) on 23 September, Pashinyan criticized Vanetsyan, who was given the rank of general, of not being an honorable military officer and stated “It appears that being de jure NSS director he made a statement against his commander-in-chief... That means throwing your shoulder marks into a trash bin.” Vanetsyan quickly responded, stating that Pashinyan kept on sending people to him with a request to keep silent for some time until the situation settled down but that he nevertheless continued to speak, that the President was misleading the Armenian and that he was “speaking up without caring for the consequences.” Vanetsyan added: “Imagine what will happen if I suddenly start speaking up without thinking about consequences. I insist with certitude, time will tell who or what will end up in a trash bin”.¹⁰ Speculations regarding Vanetsyan and his resignation did not stop and continued throughout the period.

During the period, Pashinyan made high-level dismissals and new appointments in the law enforcement agency and the military hierarchy.

According to the report published by Armstat on 9 November, Armenia’s population numbered 2,957,500 as of October 2019. This number indicates a drop by 11,700 people over the past year, in other words, it has been officially recorded that Armenia’s population keeps dropping.¹¹

Despite the Government’s optimistic statements, Armenia’s economic indicators did not display progress during the period. Armenia’s 2019 fiscal deficit is projected at around %2.5 of the gross domestic product, roughly 316 million Dollars. According to a government statement on 31 January, Armenia obtained 146 million Dollars in foreign funding which is due to finance about half of the country’s state budget deficit. The credit was essentially provided by Germany’s State-Owned Development Bank (KfW), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank.¹²

8 “Top Armenian security official resigns,” *Eurasia.net*, September 16, 2019, <https://eurasianet.org/top-armenian-security-official-resigns>

9 “Vanetsyan’s Statement After His Resignation Was A Surprise For The Party And For The Prime Minister”: Vladimir Karapetyan,” *Aravot*, September 19, 2019, <https://www.aravot-en.am/2019/09/19/240909/>

10 “Vanetsyan to Pashinyan: Do You Imagine If I Start Speaking Without Thinking about Consequences?” *Aysor*, September 23, 2019, <https://www.aysor.am/en/news/2019/09/23/vanetsyan-pashinyan/1609309>

11 “Armenia’s Permanent Population on the Decline: Statistics,” *Panorama*, November 9, 2019, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2019/11/09/Armenia/2194410>

12 “World Bank Supports Armenian Reforms With New Loan,” *Azatutyun*, November 22, 2019, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/30287039.html>

In an announcement made by the Ministry of Justice on 27 November, it was stated that a working group will be set up in February to make extensive constitutional amendments in order to assist the realization of reforms.¹³

2. The Nagorno-Karabakh Issue

Nagorno-Karabakh, which is located within the borders and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, has been an issue that has been unresolved for 27 years. The issue originated from its occupation by Armenian armed forces together with its surrounding 7 Azerbaijan provinces, the killing or forced migration of the local Azerbaijani people as a result of the implementation of ethnic cleansing, followed by the forming of a separatist administration. This conflict continues to be one of the most important issues the Pashinyan administration is facing.

In response to the universal reaction to his declaration stating that “Karabakh is Armenia” at an address to the people in Hankendi on 5 August, Pashinyan’s search for a new narrative continued during the period. On 27 August, during his speech to Armenian mission chiefs abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yerevan, under the main title “This issue which has been continuing for 30 years needs to be explained once again to the whole world”, he highlighted the necessity of the Karabakh invasion not being equalized with Abkhazia and South Ossetia in neighboring Georgia.¹⁴ During the same meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan accused Azerbaijan, repeated that the current balance cannot be changed by the usage of military force, emphasized that Azerbaijan constitutes a threat to the separatist Karabakh administration and a danger to peace. He argued that, for a peaceful resolution, Azerbaijan must view the separatist administration as a party and must negotiate with them.¹⁵

In the response issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, it was highlighted that Nagorno-Karabakh was, is, and will be an integral part of Azerbaijan. It was expressed that as a multi-ethnic state with an internationally recognized multicultural society, Azerbaijan cannot be compared in any way with mono-ethnic Armenia, which committed ethnic cleansings and massacres against the people of Azerbaijan. It was stated that the region’s self-

13 “Armenia Parliament My Step Faction Head: Working Group to Discuss Constitutional Amendments will be Set up in February,” *News.am*, November 27, 2019, <https://news.am/eng/news/546687.html>

14 “Armenian Prime Minister – Conflicts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia differ from Nagorny Karabakh,” *First Channel*, August 28, 2019, <https://1tv.ge/en/news/armenian-prime-minister-conflicts-of-abkhazia-and-south-ossetia-differ-from-nagorny-karabakh/>

15 “Azerbaijan Continues Being Threat To Existence Of Artsakh People: Armenia’s FM,” *Aysor*, August 27, 2019, <https://www.aysor.am/en/news/2019/08/27/zohrab-mnatsakanyan/1600392>

governance rights can only be discussed after the Azerbaijani population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region's safe return to their homes and decent living conditions are established there.¹⁶

During his press conference organized on 6 September, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan stated that, through working actively on the Karabakh issue throughout the year, Armenia has very clearly expressed how serious their intentions were towards the peaceful settlement process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, that the number of the meetings between the leaders and foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan an indicator of this seriousness, that he will once again meet with his Azerbaijani counterpart in the near future.¹⁷ Hence, on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in New York on 24 September, the two ministers met together with the participation of three OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and the special representative OSCE chairman in office. Following the meeting, other than the continuation of meetings for a peaceful resolution and general wishes of the co-chairs to visit the region, no concrete outcome was announced. On the other hand, despite that they were in the same venue, no meeting took place between the President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia.

The next meeting that the two leaders joined was the ten-member Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Ashkhabad summit on 11 October. During the summit, the President of Azerbaijan accused Armenia of being pro-fascism for erecting a statue and heroizing Garegin Nzhdeh who collaborated with the Nazis, while Pashinyan claimed that the aforementioned person was a hero who had fought against the Turks in 1918. Despite this verbal clash, Pashinyan's spokesperson stated to the press that the two leaders had a meeting during dinner and that they discussed the Karabakh issue.¹⁸

On 13 September, 6 representatives of the French parliament and a senator visited Nagorno-Karabakh and met with the separatist and illegal administration.¹⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan condemned this illegitimate visit to the Azerbaijan lands under occupation. Prime Minister Pashinyan, who met with the French committee in Yerevan stated "We greatly appreciate your doing which displays the special situation in the France-Armenia relations. We are grateful for your support towards the rights of the Karabakh people, our principled, consistent attitude and determination".

16 "Azerbaijan's MFA: There is No "People of Nagorno-Karabakh" Concept," *Trend News Agency*, August 27, 2019, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/3110191.html>

17 "Armenian, Azerbaijani FMs to meet 'soon'," *ArmenPress*, September 6, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/987165.html>

18 "Aliyev and Pashinyan argue on Armenian WWII figure at CIS Conference," *CaucasusWatch*, October 12, 2019, <https://caucasuswatch.de/news/2121.html>

19 "French Lawmakers Visit Karabakh," *Azattyun*, September 13, 2019, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/30163201.html>

In between the dates 24 September and 5 October, Armenia and the separatist administration of Nagorno-Karabakh conducted a 12-day-long military exercise, which was of the largest scale in Armenia's history.²⁰ No statement was made regarding the number of participating soldiers or other technical aspects.

The Chief of the Russian led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Joint Staff, Colonel General Anatoly A. Sidorov, stated on 24 September that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a serious threat to the member states of the organization.²¹ During the organization's summit meeting in Bishkek on 28 November, Pashinyan targeted Azerbaijan and Turkey. Like a brazen culprit who makes others believe he is innocent and that the person he has wronged is guilty, Pashinyan claimed that Azerbaijan was making military threats regarding the resolution of the Karabakh occupation, that Azerbaijan could become a convenient springboard for Islamic extremists, that this would be dangerous not only for Armenia, but for all of the organization's members and the region.²²

During the Valdai Forum organized in Sochi on 2 October, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergei Lavrov criticized Pashinyan's "Karabakh is Armenia" discourse and stated that this statement hampers efforts to end the Karabakh conflict. Lavrov compared this statement of Pashinyan to the statement of "Kosovo is Albania" that the Albanian Prime Minister had made in Tirana. Lavrov also made assessments regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and stated "As regards to the situation on the ground, it is much calmer now than it was one year ago, but the political process is on hold and we have not yet managed to kick-start it." Lavrov added that the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group will continue to press for the conflict's resolution, that this subject is one of the few situations where they have the same vision. The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, who was asked of her views regarding Lavrov's statements, attempted to dismiss the criticism and expressed their expectation that each of the mediators avoid one-sided evaluations.²³

Through a press statement on 28 October, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the Nagorno-Karabakh Document adopted at the 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement

20 "Armenia, Karabakh to Hold Strategic Military Exercises," *Massispost*, September 19, 2019, <https://massispost.com/2019/09/armenia-karabakh-to-hold-strategic-military-exercises/>

21 "Anatoly Sidorov: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Remains Serious Threat to CSTO Member States," *News.am*, September 24, 2019, <https://news.am/eng/news/535154.html>

22 "CSTO has Necessary Measures To Prevent New Escalation around Nagorno Karabakh – Armenian PM," *ArmenPress*, November 28, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/996922.html>

23 "Russian FM Critical Of Pashinyan's Karabakh Remark," *Azattyun*, October 3, 2019, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/30197687.html>

(NAM) held in Baku and accused Azerbaijan of conveying the issue outside of the location for the resolution, which is the OSCE and Minsk Group, and undermining the process.²⁴

Voices opposing Pashinyan continued their activities inside Karabakh. The most striking amongst them was from the separatist administration's former Secretary of the Security Council, Major General Vitaliy Balasanyan, who is regarded as a national hero. Balasanyan, who is a "presidential" candidate in the 2020 elections of the separatist administration, used extremely aggressive language during a statement to the public opinion on 10 October. Not only did he harshly criticize Pashinyan, but he also threatened to physically punish him.²⁵ In the response from the government, it was stated that Balasanyan connected his political career with former President Sargsyan and that his future will also be in the same political trash bin.

Within the framework of their visits to the region that have become a routine, the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group visited the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Armenia on 15 October.²⁶ The parties continued the endeavors to monitor and develop the matters discussed by the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia during the New York meetings in September. Two items were striking in the press statements published by the co-chairs after the visit: The co-chairs stated that they met with the Chairman of the Azerbaijani Community of Nagorno-Karabakh during their visit to Baku. This certainly indicates an important development regarding the recognition and existence of the Azerbaijani people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Another item was the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia stating that they would meet again before the end of the year with the participation of the co-presidents.²⁷ This meeting took place in Bratislava on 4 December, on the margins of the OSCE Foreign Ministers annual meeting. The Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries issued a joint statement following the meeting. The text of the statement is here below:

“On the occasion of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Bratislava, we, the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries (Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei

24 “Statement By MFA Of Armenia On The Final Document Adopted at The 18th Summit of The Heads Of State and Government of The Non-Aligned Movement (Nam) Held in Baku,” *Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of The Republic Of Armenia*, October 28, 2019, https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2019/10/28/mfa_statement/9919

25 “Karabakh General Threatens To ‘Destroy’ Armenian PM,” *Jam-News*, October 10, 2019, <https://jam-news.net/karabakh-general-threatens-to-destroy-armenian-pm/>

26 “Armenian PM receives OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” *ArmenPress*, October 15, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/991658/>

27 “Press Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group,” *OSCE*, October 17, 2019, <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/436265>

Lavrov, Secretary of State to the Minister for European and Foreign Affairs of France Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs of the United States Phil Reeker) remain strongly committed to mediating a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation take positive note of the relatively low level of violence along the Line of Contact and international border and credit the sides for utilizing fully the direct communication links between them to reduce the risk of escalation, as the Foreign Ministers agreed during consultations in Washington in June. We welcome the concrete steps undertaken in the past year to reduce tensions and prepare the populations for peace, as the Co-Chair countries called for in the Milan statement in December 2018 and as the Ministers agreed to do in Paris in January 2019. We commend efforts to implement the humanitarian measures discussed by the leaders during their meeting in Vienna in March and elaborated upon by the Foreign Ministers in Moscow in April, in particular the recently concluded exchange of journalists and the simultaneous release of prisoners on 28 June. Noting that such efforts play an important role in fostering an atmosphere conducive to substantive negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement, the three Heads of Delegation call for additional concrete humanitarian and security measures.

The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation urge the sides to take concrete steps without delay to implement earlier agreements on humanitarian and security measures. Bearing in mind the terrible human suffering of the bereaved, we call on the sides to redouble efforts to assist the International Committee for the Red Cross to exchange data on missing persons, as the two leaders committed to do during the Paris summit of October 2014. Recognizing the essential contribution of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office (PRCIO) in maintaining the ceasefire, we note the need to resume discussions on expanding the PRCIO's monitoring mission, which the parties agreed in 2016 to do.

We welcome the intention of the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to meet again in early 2020 under Co-Chair auspices to intensify negotiations on the core issues of a peaceful settlement and to facilitate further talks at the highest level. The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation reiterate that a fair and lasting settlement must be based, in particular, upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act of non-use of force or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, recalling the joint statement of the Co-Chair country Heads of Delegation and the Azerbaijani and Armenian

Foreign Ministers at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Athens in 2009, which was subsequently endorsed by the OSCE Ministerial Council. It should also embrace additional elements proposed by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries in 2009-2012.

The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation stress once again that the status quo is unacceptable and there can be no military solution to the conflict. We therefore call on the sides to engage in good faith substantive negotiations without artificial delays or conditions.

The Co-Chair Heads of Delegation express the conviction that the OSCE Minsk Group format remains the indispensable focal point for efforts to reach a sustainable settlement. We call upon the sides to cooperate with each other and with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, whom we will instruct to continue their mediation efforts.”²⁸

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov also expressed the hope that his Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts will issue a joint statement with the mediating powers. This did not materialize. The statement was signed only by the co-chair officials. Azerbaijani and Armenian Ministers however expressed their own version of the outcome.

The Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov said “My meeting with my Armenian counterpart lasted for three and a half hours. These were quite tough negotiations. Unfortunately, we still have unresolved problems.” He also underlined the need for “immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan”. He also reiterated that Karabakh’s Armenian population can only be granted the status of self-rule within Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan presented his position on seven principles, summing up that the security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh could not be compromised and must be guaranteed, urging Azerbaijan to recognize the right to self-determination.

All of the above indicated once again that no progress was achieved in the Bratislava talks and the only agreement was for the two ministers to meet again early next year.

On 6 December, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said that the Eastern Partnership Summit declarations

28 “Joint Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries,” *OSCE*, December 5, 2019, <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/441242>

clearly state that the EU remains committed in its support to the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of all its partners, including Azerbaijan. In this vein, he added that the EU does not recognize constitutional framework within which so called “elections” held in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the ongoing occupation continued to present Pashinyan with a dilemma. He could not establish a viable strategy for a solution. His indecisive, even contradictory statements further exacerbated the situation. In his statement on 4 November, Pashinyan asserted that there was full consensus with the Karabakh separatist administration regarding the resolving of the issue, that the former government officials have been spending millions of dollars on disinformation aimed at discrediting his government, and lastly, that they are frightening the people by stating that the negotiations are in deadlock and with the prospect of war due to him declaring that territorial concessions will not be made. In that vein, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan also felt the need to state that the meetings on ending the Karabakh conflict were not in deadlock.²⁹

A novel discourse that was cultivated by Pashinyan during the period and emphasized in his speech during the UN General Assembly was a suggestion that the solution should entail the acceptance of all three peoples of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Thereby, on one hand, Azerbaijan’s right is acknowledged, on the other hand, the effort to put Karabakh as a party, where the remaining population is solely Armenian as a result of ethnic cleansing, continued. Azerbaijan gave an understandable response to this discourse. It was expressed that Azerbaijan would discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh self-government conditions if the displaced people of Nagorno-Karabakh return to their homes and attain normal living conditions. Armenia perceived this development as a dangerous “equality” in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiation process. This is because the popular opinion in Armenia is that the OSCE Minsk Group believes Nagorno-Karabakh can only possibly become a party in the negotiations if the “Azerbaijani Community of Karabakh” participates as part of the principle of equality. It is reflected in the press that such a development would disrupt the negotiation process for Armenia and would be a practice that will not create positive prospects for the Armenians.

3. Armenia’s Foreign Relations

It has become evident that during the period, the Pashinyan administration adopted the practice of obviating or alleviating the domestic difficulties and

29 “Armenia Should Be A Country Where Person’s Right To Think Is Respected, Says PM,” *ArmenPress*, November 4, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/994112.html>

pressure by directing attention outwards. Within this framework, a foreign policy with emphasis on visits abroad gained momentum. On one hand, bearing in mind the sensitivities of Russia (to which Armenia is dependent with ties that cannot easily be broken), and on one other hand, striving for drawing closer to the EU and the US (attracted by their appeal and glow), yet also, gravitating towards the potential of China (which has been on the rise in Eurasia), require careful and balanced steps. Another striking feature of the period was focusing on the subject of how to benefit, mainly financially, from the full potential of the diaspora Armenians. Zareh Sinanyan, an Armenian citizen elected from the Armenian community of the US State of California, was appointed as the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of Armenia, which is directly subordinate to the Prime Minister, became the visible and prominent figure to attain this end.

During his speech to Armenia's foreign representatives on 27 August, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan explained Armenia's foreign policy guidelines and principles as basis for action.³⁰ The Minister began with three features exclusive to Armenia: A country that is, firstly, the first nation to adopt Christianity and bridge civilizations, secondly, with rich historical and cultural heritage, thirdly, having identified itself for modern values with the 2018 Velvet Revolution. The Minister also attributed the foreign policy of Armenia to three fundamental principles: The first being Armenia-centered sovereignty, the second being Pan-Armenianism (which is viewing Armenia, Karabakh and the Armenian diaspora as a single entity with a unified agenda), and the third being equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation with any state. In his speech, after emphasizing a strategic alliance with Russia, the Minister cited Iran and Georgia, the trilateral format with the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus (GASC, South Cyprus) and Greece, the US, the EU, France, and Germany within the context of important relations.

Pashinyan, who spoke at the same meeting, highlighted that there have been noteworthy changes in Armenia's foreign policy since he took office. The Prime Minister did not specify what these changes were and stated "I repeatedly stated during and after the 2018 revolution that there will be no U-turns in Armenia's foreign policy and there have indeed been no U-turns. But this doesn't mean that nothing has changed in Armenia's foreign policy. In fact, a lot has changed in Armenia's foreign policy". He expressed that what is constant is balance and flexibility policies, that renouncing these would be imprudence.

30 "Opening Remarks By Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan At The Annual Conference Of The MFA Apparatus And Heads Of Diplomatic Service Abroad," *Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of The Republic Of Armenia*, August 27, 2019, https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2019/08/27/fm_opening_remarks/9782

Armenia's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Sinanyan visited South Cyprus on 28 August with his counterparts from the GASC and Greece in order to conduct a trilateral meeting and enhance the cooperation between the diasporas of the three actors.³¹ His South Cypriot interlocutor stated that the three actors have influential diasporas in the world, notably in the US, France, Britain and Australia, that they could mobilize the diasporas towards the interests of the three actors by trilateral cooperation, that, based on this example, they could also form the Israel, Greece, GASC trilateral model, they could further discuss three historical tragedies, Turkey's 1974 operation on Cyprus, the "Pontic genocide" and "Armenian genocide" in the trilateral meeting to be held. His South Cypriot interlocutor also expressed that his administration has a project to construct a museum of Armenia in Southern Cyprus, to be sponsored with EU funds. On 6 September, the Armenian Commissioner went to Russia, where the largest Armenian population is located, to hold official talks that would last for 11 days. During his meeting with Armenian students in Moscow, Sinanyan stated that Armenia is working on a law that would confer citizenship in Armenia and promote repatriation. After Russia, Sinanyan passed on to Ukraine and met with the representatives of the Armenian community.

Pashinyan faced with an embarrassing situation at the end of August. The Armenian Government had accepted the invitation by the Government of Poland to the 80th Anniversary of the start of World War II and the 29th International Economic Forum on 1 September. Learning afterwards that the Russian President Vladimir Putin would not be attending, at the last moment, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Pashinyan would also not be attending. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan made an elusive explanation regarding the subject and stated "This is an expression of sovereignty. We have not refused. The Prime Minister has his own program of visits, which he implements, as well as his domestic policy priorities." Likewise, in response to the question from the journalists, the Armenian Minister of Economy Tigran Khachatryan, who did not attend the Economic Forum at the last moment, stated that he was not competent to answer why Armenia did not participate in the Forum.³² The Spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry made a statement on 4 September that they endorsed Armenia's decision not to participate.

Russian President Putin celebrated on 1 September, by telephone and a written congratulatory message, the 65th Birthday of former Armenian President

31 "Ermenistan'ın Diaspora İşleri Baş Komiseri Kıbrıs Yolunda," *Ermeni Haber Ajanstı*, 16 Ağustos 2019, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2019/08/16/Ermenistan-Kıbrıs-Diaspora-Kıbrıs/162052>

32 "Armenia's Foreign Minister Explains Why Pashinyan Will Not Travel to Poland," *Massis Post*, August 30, 2019, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Bulten/ARMENIA-S-FOREIGN-MINISTER-EXPLAINS-WHY-PASHINYAN-WILL-NOT-TRAVEL-TO-POLAND>

Kocharyan, who is jailed pending trial as a result of the accusations lodged against him by the Pashinyan administration.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Laura K. Cooper visited Armenia on 11 September to discuss the enhancement of the defense and security ties between the two countries. Since 2002, the US' military aid to Armenia, most of which was allocated to Armenia's roughly 160 soldiers in Afghanistan and Kosovo and the peace-keeping troops in Lebanon and Mali, has reached 50 million Dollars.³³

Germany's former President Joachim Gauck visited Armenia on 16 September upon the invitation of Armenian President Armen Sarkissian.³⁴ A. Sarkissian thanked him for his speech at the Berlin Cathedral commemorating and acknowledging the "Armenian genocide" when Gauck was in office. Gauck stated that he felt great pleasure that Armenia carefully followed his speech at the Berlin Cathedral.

The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan conducted an official visit to the Baltic state Lithuania on 17 September.

Pashinyan visited the US on 21 September to attend the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Before his visit to the US, he strived in an intense and persistent manner and mobilized all possibilities in order to create an opportunity to meet with US President Donald Trump, with no success. In response to the questions asked regarding this subject, the US Ambassador in Yerevan stated that such a meeting will take place at the right time and if needed. On 22 September, the Prime Minister addressed large numbers of the Armenian community in Los Angeles for an hour and emphasized his expectation of the diaspora's support and active contribution. Afterwards, Pashinyan passed on to New York and addressed the UN General Assembly on 24 September. The focus of his speech was his anti-Turkey stance and genocide claims.³⁵

The foreign ministers of Armenia, Greece and the GASC conducted a trilateral meeting on 25 September in New York where they visited on the occasion of the UNGA. The parties verified the decision to organize a trilateral summit meeting in Yerevan in 2020 and reviewed the preparatory work.³⁶

33 "Laura Cooper: Armenia is an important partner for the USA," *Arminfo*, September 11, 2019, https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=45075&lang=3

34 "Almanya'nın eski Cumhurbaşkanı Joachim Gauck Ermenistan'da," *Ermeni Haber Ajansı*, 16 Eylül 2019, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2019/09/16/Almanya-Gauck-Ermenistan-Ejmiadzin/164365>

35 "Statement by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at UN General Assembly 74th Session," *Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, September 26, 2019, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2019/09/26/Nikol-Pashinyan-74th-session-of-UN-General-Assembly/>

36 "Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Cyprus and Greece meet in New York," *Armradio.am*, September 26, 2019, <https://en.armradio.am/2019/09/26/foreign-ministers-of-armenia-cyprus-and-greece-meet-in-new-york/>

Armenian President A. Sarkissian visited Italy on 23 September to hold unofficial meetings.³⁷

The annual Eurasian Economic Summit, chaired by Armenia in 2019, assembled in Yerevan on 1 October. In addition to the heads of states of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, the President of Moldova and the Prime ministers of Iran and Singapore joined the summit as special guests of Armenia.³⁸ The Armenian press gave wide coverage for days to the summit and the bilateral meetings conducted on this occasion. The visit of the Russian President Putin became a subject of speculation weeks prior. It was discussed whether the Putin-Kocharyan friendship would overshadow the visit, Putin settled with visiting the wife of Kocharyan whose imprisonment continues in Yerevan.³⁹

President A. Sarkissian visited Serbia on 4 October. In his interview with the newspaper *Politika*, Sarkissian stated that the destinies of the Serbian and Armenian peoples have many similarities, that throughout history, they have often fought side by side against the same conqueror for freedom, that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries their national liberation movements and the Hayduk groups closely cooperated. During the same interview, A. Sarkissian also claimed that there were Armenian churches in Belgrade and elsewhere in Serbia and that these were later supposedly destroyed by the Turks in the 18th century.⁴⁰

On 10 October, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan joined the annual Foreign Ministers meeting in Ashkhabad of CIS. Mnatsakanyan also presented Armenian arguments here regarding the subject of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia, during his first official visit abroad, visited Armenia on 15 October following his visit of Azerbaijan.⁴¹ Pashinyan stated that one of the biggest achievements of his 1.5 years in the Prime Minister's post is further strengthening relations with Georgia. Gakharia praised Armenia for recognizing Georgia's sovereignty over two

37 "Armenian, Italian Presidents Hold Meeting," *ArmenPress*, September 26, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/989452.html>

38 "World Leaders from Iran, Russia Converge at Eurasian Economic Summit in Yerevan," *Armenian Weekly*, October 2, 2019, <https://armenianweekly.com/2019/10/02/world-leaders-from-iran-russia-converge-at-eurasian-economic-summit-in-yerevan/>

39 "Putin Meets Kocharian's Wife," *Azattyun*, January 2, 2019, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/30195524.html>

40 "President Sarkissian to Serbia Newspaper: 'Serbian Diaspora supports the Armenian Diaspora, especially on the Armenian Genocide'," *Hetq*, October 4, 2019, <https://hetq.am/en/article/108237>

41 "Georgian-Armenian PMs Meet, Vow Further Strengthening of Ties for Mutual Benefit," *Agenda.ge*, October 15, 2019, <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/2759>

breakaway regions. Pashinyan expressed that the relations between the two countries must not be hampered by “external factors”, that they discussed regional conflicts in this context, that they stressed the importance of maintaining balanced positions on issues sensitive to each other. It was noted that the Armenia-Georgia bilateral trade volume reached 92 million Dollars with a %5 increase in the first 8 months of the year.

On 22 October, Armenia’s Minister of Defense David Tonoyan had a private meeting with the Minister of National Defense of China on the sidelines of the 9th Xiangshan Forum on International Security.⁴² On 17 December, President A. Sarkissian signed the Law on Ratifying the Agreement on Mutual Abolition of the Visa Requirement for Persons Holding Ordinary Passports between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China.

Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria Ekaterina Zaharieva visited Armenia on 28 October. During the meeting, Pashinyan emphasized the importance Armenia attaches to her relations with Bulgaria, underlined the Armenia-Bulgaria Intergovernmental Commission meeting and business forum which is said to be held in March.⁴³

On 25 October, Pashinyan visited Moscow to join the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council. He hereby met with Russia’s Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Medvedev thanked Pashinyan for Armenia’s presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union, which expires this year.⁴⁴ No meeting took place with Russia’s President Putin.

The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan appeared as a guest on the British BBC television’s “Hard Talk” program on 25 October. As part of the program’s nature, the host asked the Minister pressing questions, underlined Armenia playing a double or even a triple game between great powers, to which the Minister stated “... [i]f we declare that we are only going in one direction, will this work immediately or will we wait ten to fifteen years? We can’t even afford a 10-15 minute security vacuum.”⁴⁵

42 “Armenian defense minister meets Chinese counterpart in Beijing,” *ArmenPress*, October 22, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/992472.html>

43 “Zaharieva from Armenia: There Are no Direct Flights between our Countries,” *Novinite*, October 28, 2019, <https://www.novinite.com/articles/201286/Zaharieva+from+Armenia%3A+There+Are+no+Direct+Flights+between+our+Country>

44 “Armenia, Russia PMs meet in Moscow,” *News.am*, October 25, 2019, <https://news.am/eng/news/540982.html>

45 “Interview of Armenia’s Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan to BBC HardTalk’s Stephen Sackur,” *YouTube*, October 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJTGRiBCRkw>

The President of Greece Prokopios Pavlopoulos visited Armenia on 5 November. Following his meeting with Pashinyan, Pashinyan announced that the first Armenia, Greece and GASC trilateral summit will take place in Yerevan in January 2020. The Greek President Pavlopoulos stated that he is pleased with Armenia's efforts for the recognition of the "Armenian genocide" in the international sphere, that this is important and that they support these efforts. He further added that they are happy that Armenia has recognized the "Pontic genocide", that they are pleased with the US House of Representatives' resolution to recognize the alleged genocide. The spokesperson of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in response to a question asked on 7 November, responded to the Greek President's statements:⁴⁶

"We witness that Greece continues to take side with the hostile circles against Turkey and support their baseless stance and allegations.

Turkey has never forgotten the atrocities committed by Greece against Turks and other citizens of the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, it is a well-known fact that Greece has systematically annihilated Turks and Muslims in the region during and after the period of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Even today, Greece continues its inhumane practices against its Turkish minorities, taking it as far as to punish Muftis with imprisonment for performing a Friday prayer.

Turkey, who believes the necessity of taking lessons of peace and fraternity rather than hostility from history, is well aware of the said historical realities. [...]"

Archbishop Paul Gallagher, who has the status of the Vatican's Secretary of Foreign Relations, visited Yerevan on 9 November, met with the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs and afterwards with the Prime Minister. In the statements made after the meetings, it was underlined that religion-based subjects, such as the protection of the Christian minorities in the Middle East, preserving the Christian historical heritage, were discussed.⁴⁷ No news reports were available regarding Pashinyan not meeting with the Pope in his visit to Italy that was announced to take place on 20 November or the problems of internal politics of the former Ambassador of Armenia at the Vatican.

46 "QA-69, 7 November 2019, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement Made by Greek President Prokopios Pavlopoulos During His Visit to Armenia," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, November 7, 2019, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-69_-yunanistan-cbsk-nin-bindokuzyuzonbes-olaylari-hk-aciklamasi-hk-sc.en.mfa

47 "The presence of Catholic church to contribute to prosperity of the Armenian public - Archbishop Paul Gallagher," *Panorama*, November 9, 2019, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2019/11/09/Catholic/2194329>

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, in an interview given to the Armenian press on 9 November, before his visit to Armenia on 10-11 November (his first after the revolution), stated that the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations would contribute to the healing of the general political atmosphere in the Caucasus. Lavrov stated that the regulation of the Turkish-Armenian relations is, first of all, the issue of bilateral agenda of Yerevan and Ankara, but unfortunately at the current phase Russia's partners have not succeeded in restoring the diplomatic relations. Lavrov stated that Russia hopes that Armenia and Turkey will continue working in that direction, and that such opportunities still exist, and that Russia is ready to provide necessary support to the parties.⁴⁸ Lavrov conducted meetings with the Armenian President, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister with emphasis on mutual solidarity. Lavrov stated that, according to the agreement reached, the biological laboratories established in Armenia with the sponsorship of the US have also become accessible to Russian experts. A following visit of Lavrov to Baku took place on December 2-3. There, Lavrov brought up the importance to resume contacts between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Prime Minister Pashinyan visited France on 12 November to attend the Second Paris Peace Conference and, within this framework, met with the President of France Emmanuel Macron. Pashinyan also attended the 40th UNESCO General Conference. Pashinyan also met with the representatives of the Armenian community in Paris and stated that "There is no border between Armenia and the diaspora, we are one whole."⁴⁹

The Armenian President A. Sarkissian visited Qatar on 17 November. On 21 November, he paid a working visit to the UK.⁵⁰

According to the news reports in the Armenian media, the President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda made groundless and unwarranted claims that reflected him being in full agreement with the Armenian allegations and views during a press meeting on 14 November.

Prime Minister Pashinyan started an official visit to Italy on 20 November and met with Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in Rome. On 27-28 November, he visited Kyrgyzstan together with the Foreign and Defense Ministers to join

48 "Russia ready to contribute to normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey – FM Lavrov," *ArmenPress*, November 11, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/994796.html>

49 "Pashinyan Travels to France for Peace Conference, UNESCO Anniversary," *Mirror Spectator*, November 14, 2019, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/11/14/pashinyan-travels-to-france-for-peace-conference-unesco-anniversary/>

50 "President of Armenia arrives in Qatar for official visit," *Armradio.am*, November 17, 2019, <https://en.armradio.am/2019/11/17/president-of-armenia-arrives-in-qatar-for-official-visit/>

the annual meeting of the CSTO. In his speech, he complained about Azerbaijan and claimed that Azerbaijan's position threatens security in the Caucasus.⁵¹

4. Turkey-Armenia Relations

Pashinyan, who is conscious of the necessity to divert the serious and pressing issues he is facing, conscious of the necessity for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict where he is under intense pressure, and striving to find a foreign scapegoat for the concessions, appears to be targeting Turkey to a degree that no other Armenian administration until now had ventured. Armenia under the Pashinyan administration has become the universal conductor of enmity towards Turkey for those who have a score to settle with Turkey. Turkey being situated in a turbulent region in between the universal clash of interests and the existence of challenges outside traditional Turkish foreign policy line creates possibilities for Armenia to play such a role. On the other hand, by stating on every occasion that they are ready to meet with Turkey without preconditions, Armenia's leaders have not given up on their attempts to display themselves as followers of peace and Turkey as the irreconcilable party that wants to impose its demands. Turkey's accepting of the Armenian claims and demands, that is to say, coming to the table without being a "denialist", is not a precondition in the Armenian understanding.

During his speech on 27 August to the representatives of Armenia abroad, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan stated that Turkey creates a security threat to Armenia.⁵² As justification for this claim, the Minister put forward Turkey not establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia, Turkey's supposed economic blockade of Armenia, the "denial" of the genocide allegations and recently the supposed discourse regarding the justification of genocidal actions, and the support to Azerbaijan in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In his same speech, he underlined his satisfaction with the trilateral format they established with Greece and the GASC. Again, in the same speech, he emphasized the importance of the efforts made on the topic of preventing genocides being part of the international agenda.

On the subject of relations with Turkey, Pashinyan, who gave interviews to leading Iranian media outlets on 2 September, stated that they are ready to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey without preconditions, but that this

51 "Armenian PM's official visit to Italy continues," *News.am*, November 22, 2019, <https://news.am/eng/news/545804.html>

52 "Opening Remarks By Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan At The Annual Conference Of The MFA Apparatus And Heads Of Diplomatic Service Abroad," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, August 27, 2019, https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2019/08/27/fm_opening_remarks/9782

does not mean that Armenia retracts from its policy aimed at the international recognition of the “genocide”, that the recognition of the “Armenian genocide” does not only touch upon the relations between the two countries, that Armenia views the issue also from the viewpoint of international security.⁵³

During the press conference organized on 6 September, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs repeated the following regarding the impediment in relations with Turkey: “Such realities are the rejection of the Zurich process, the constant blockade, the continuous denialist policy of the Genocide and the highlighted bias on the Nagorno Karabkah issue by Turkey”. The Minister stated that Turkey does not have the similar stance of Armenia regarding the normalization of the relations.⁵⁴

The Armenian press published the case of a process for divesting from Turkish bonds in the pension funds of the US State of California approved on 12 September and completed with the State Governor’s signature on 3 October.⁵⁵ This was published as a significant victory achieved by the initiatives of the American minority of Armenian descent.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on 26 September, Pashinyan registered his opposition towards Turkey with his statement:

“Two out of the four international borders of Armenia, including the one with Turkey, have been closed for almost three decades. By refusing to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, overtly assisting Azerbaijan against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey remains a serious security threat to Armenia and the Armenian people who had experienced the deep tragedy of the genocide and continue to face the fierce denial of truth and justice”.

Pashinyan also expressed that Russia is their key strategic partner and that Georgia and Iran are their strategic neighbors.⁵⁶

On 10 October, at an emergency meeting chaired by Prime Minister Pashinyan, Armenia’s government condemned Turkey’s Peace Spring Operation in north Syria and characterized it as illegal. In his statement before

53 “Armenian PM gives interviews to several leading Iranian media outlets,” *ArmenPress*, September 2, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/986570/>

54 “Armenian FM comments on establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey,” *ArmenPress*, September 6, 2019, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/987127.html>

55 “Assembly Joint Resolution No. 16,” *California Legislative Information*, September 11, 2019, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AJR16

56 “Armenia - Prime Minister Addresses General Debate, 74th Session,” *YouTube*, September 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF691KXhWVA>

the meeting, Pashinyan stated “We are concerned about the situation because we believe that action will further deepen the humanitarian crisis in Syria. We are calling on the international community to take meaningful measures to stop that illegal action and protect Syrian citizens, including ethnic minorities, along the Turkish border”. Pashinyan also indicated that the Armenian military will continue its small-scale “humanitarian mission” in Syria closely coordinated with Russia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia also issued a statement claiming that the Turkish “invasion” would further destabilize the region and result in civilian casualties, calling on the international community to stop the offensive and “prevent mass atrocities”. The statement also expressed that the situation was becoming particularly alarming for ethnic and religious minorities. An official of the Ministry indicated that around 3000 Syrian Armenians currently live in the northeastern city of Qamishli close to the Turkish border.⁵⁷

In a short period of time, the reaction against the Peace Spring Operation turned into a widespread and orchestrated Armenian campaign. On 11 October, the Armenian Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin made a statement embedded with politics and expressed that the danger of the Turkish “attacks” awakens memories of the “Armenian genocide” in 1915-1923. (The response to this came from Turkey’s Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, in which full support was expressed for Turkey’s military anti-terror operation in Syria.) The Armenian Revolutionary Federation also made a statement on 11 October and condemned Turkey’s “attack” on Syria. On 15 October, during the 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Speaker of the Parliament of Armenia called on all parliamentarians not to stay indifferent and consider unacceptable Turkey’s operations in Syria, claimed that these disasters were taking place in the same place, the same geographical space where the remnants of the victims of the “Armenian genocide” committed by the Ottoman Empire 100 years ago in the soil and sand. That soil, the fertile lands of Syria, were where the Armenian population was resettled.

In the press conference organized during the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister’s visit on 28 October, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan stated that the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu talked of “terrorists of Armenian nationality in the ranks of the Kurdistan Workers Party [PKK]”, that such statements threaten Armenia’s security, that they condemn and reject such statements. Afterwards, there were news publications in the Armenian media claiming that the Turkish General Staff had prepared secret strike plans against Armenia in 2001 under the code “Altay Operation”. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Mnatsakanyan commented

57 “Armenia Condemns ‘Illegal’ Turkish Offensive In Syria,” *Azattyun*, October 9, 2019, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/30209604.html>

on these news publications on 2 December, stating that the issue is of serious concern, which is why Armenia continues to follow developments in Turkey and that Turkey is pursuing a policy that is damaging to Armenia.

On 29 October, the US House of Representatives passed by a large majority the H.Res.296 resolution titled “Affirming the United States record on the Armenian genocide” which reflects the mindset of the House of Representatives but is not binding: The text of the resolution is as follows:

“RESOLUTION 296 (H. Res. 296)

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

October 29, 2019.

Whereas the United States has a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and providing relief to the survivors of the campaign of genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians;

Whereas the Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of many countries against what he described as the empire’s “campaign of race extermination”, and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the “Department approves your procedure * * * to stop Armenian persecution”;

Whereas President Woodrow Wilson encouraged the formation of the Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress, which raised \$116,000,000 (over \$2,500,000,000 in 2019 dollars) between 1915 and 1930, and the Senate adopted resolutions condemning these massacres;

Whereas Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century;

Whereas, as displayed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Adolf Hitler, on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by saying “[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”, setting the stage for the Holocaust;

Whereas the United States has officially recognized the Armenian Genocide, through the United States Government’s May 28, 1951, written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through President Ronald Reagan’s Proclamation No. 4838 on April 22, 1981, and by House Joint Resolution 148, adopted on April 8, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247, adopted on September 10, 1984; and

Whereas the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–441) establishes that atrocities prevention represents a United States national interest, and affirms that it is the policy of the United States to pursue a United States Government-wide strategy to identify, prevent, and respond to the risk of atrocities by “strengthening diplomatic response and the effective use of foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability, for past atrocities”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that it is the policy of the United States to—

- (1) commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance;
- (2) reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the United States Government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide; and
- (3) encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, including the United States role in the humanitarian relief effort, and the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity.”⁵⁸

The draft resolution, prepared by the US State of California Representative Adam Schiff and Florida Representative Gus Bilirakis, was presented to both wings of the House by Schiff. Anna Eshoo, who is one of the three American House Representatives of Armenian descent, emphasized her religious background and said that her family was a victim of the “genocide” in her speech. Representative Ilhan Omar, of Muslim background, abstained from the resolution and received harsh criticism. State of Arizona Representative Paul Gosar abstained from a vote, stating, “As a Christian I stand with the

58 “H.Res.296 — 116th Congress (2019-2020),” *U.S. Congress*, October 29, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116th-congress/house-resolution/296/text>

Armenians, but I will not vote for a lie”. While the resolution did not create jubilation in Armenia, it was nevertheless welcomed. On the other hand, the highest praise came from the officials of the Armenian Catholicosates Etchmiadzin in Armenia as well as Cilicia in Lebanon.

The statement of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejecting the resolution is as follows:

“We reject the resolution H.Res.296 entitled ‘Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide’ that is adopted today by the U.S. House of Representatives as expressing the sense of the Latter.

The resolution which has apparently been drafted and issued for domestic consumption is devoid of any historical or legal basis.

The resolution itself is also not legally binding. As a meaningless political step, its sole addressees are the Armenian lobby and anti-Turkey groups.

Those who felt defeated for not being able to forestall Operation Peace Spring would be highly mistaken should they thought that they could take vengeance this way.

Since in the eyes of the Turkish government and the people, this resolution is totally null and void.

There can be no further delusion than an attempt to rewrite history according to the ‘sense’ of a political body.

The resolution as it stands is both against the U.S. and international law as it is an incrimination against the principles defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. There is no verdict of a competent court with regard to the 1915 events that establishes the crime of genocide. On the contrary, European Court of Human Rights delivered a milestone judgment which stipulates that 1915 events constitute a legitimate subject for debate.

Hence, the debate on the events that occurred in 1915 belongs to the realm of history, not politics.

It should be remembered that Turkey’s proposal on the establishment of a Joint Historical Commission made in 2005 was rejected by the Armenian side.

The U.S. Administration and politicians as well as the American people are best placed to consider the damages this resolution seeking to disrupt Turkey-U.S. ties does and will inflict upon the U.S. interests at an extremely fragile time in terms of the international and regional security. On the other hand, it is also noted that the attitude of the U.S. Administration on 1915 events remains the same.

Undoubtedly, this resolution will negatively affect the image of the U.S. before the public opinion of Turkey as it also brings the dignity of the U.S. House of Representatives into disrepute.

We believe that American friends of Turkey who support the continuation of the alliance and friendly relations will question this grave mistake and those who are responsible will be judged by the conscience of the American people.”⁵⁹

An article that appeared in the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) criticizing the resolution is as follows:

“On 29 October 2019, the US House of Representatives voted 405 to 11 in favor of a resolution titled ‘H.Res.296 - Affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide.’ This resolution resolved that the US should officially recognize the ‘Armenian Genocide;’ reject all ventures to deny ‘the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide’ and support initiatives seeking to raise awareness about the ‘Armenian Genocide’ and its relevance ‘to modern-day crimes against humanity.’ As such, the resolution of the US House of Representatives looked like a great victory for the Armenian lobbies in the US, which have been concentrating almost all their efforts for the passage of a resolution not for years but decades. Hence the passage of the almost unanimously supported ‘genocide resolution’ should have been a justified reason for festivity among these circles. Alas, that has not been the case.

Almost a month has passed since 29 October 2019 and we have been following the print and online media and social media to see the reactions that this resolution elicited among the advocates of the Armenian narrative. What we have seen is quiet and restraint among the rank and file in the US as well as Armenia and other countries. This is quite a contrast with the ecstasy during the sensational times of 2015 and 2016, when some parliaments in Europe had passed resolutions on

59 “No: 315, 29 October 2019, Press Release Regarding the Resolution Entitled ‘Affirming the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide’ Passed by the U.S. House of Representatives,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 29, 2019, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_315_-ermeni-soykirimi-konusunda-abd-nin-tutumunu-teyit-baslikli-karar-hk.en.mfa.

the ‘Armenian Genocide.’ Why is it so? Well, the answer is the decades-long strived for victory of 29 October 2019 is no victory or just a Pyrrhic one.

For many people, reading the texts of resolutions, laws, decrees and other official documents is not the most enjoyable activity on earth. Besides, why should one spend time for such a dull thing, when she is informed that the US House of Representatives has passed a resolution on Armenian Genocide? Is this not the main point that we should know? Not really. As said, ‘devil is in details’ and it is that ‘devil’ that Armenian lobbyists try to hide, yet to no avail.

The Preamble of the House Resolution starts with the following:

Whereas the United States has a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and providing relief to the survivors of the campaign of genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians;

Let’s skip the the factually erroneous claims of the number game of ‘1.5 million’ and the ever extending dates of ‘1915-1923’ and focus on the second part of this statement. Here, the House frames the ‘Armenian Genocide’ within the wider ‘genocide of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.’ ‘The genocide of the Christians perpetrated by the Muslim Ottomans’ is a relatively new claim forged by the advocates of the genocide thesis in the last couple of years in order to win the hearts of the conservative Christians and the others distressed by the atrocities of the DAESH/ISIS and similar Jihadist terrorists in the Middle East. Likewise, it is an attempt to win comrades in arms among radical Greeks and others in the ‘holy war’ against Turkey. It is obvious to almost all serious scholars that such a comprehensive ‘genocide of the Christians’ is a politically motivated pseudo-academic claim. Besides, the ambiguous expression of ‘other Christians’ which fails to specify who these other Christians are, reflect the haphazard and sloppy approach of the representatives in the House. Regrettably for the Armenian lobbyists, this is the result of their decades-long committed efforts. The House equates the ‘Armenian Genocide’ with equally politically motivated forgeries on the ‘genocide’ of the “Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians.” So much effort, so much money have gone up in smoke.

In the preamble of the resolution, the House refers to the reports of ‘Honorable Henry Morgenthau United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916’ as one of the evidences of the factuality of the ‘Armenian Genocide.’ Lamentably for the Representatives in the House and the Armenian lobbyists, this claim has already been disproved long ago, particularly after the publication of Heath W. Lowry’s ‘The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story’ in 1990.

Another reference in the preamble of the resolution is given to Raphael Lemkin ‘who coined the term ‘genocide’ in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century.’ Referring to Lemkin in order to prove the factuality of the ‘Armenian genocide’ is also a relatively new habit. The reason behind this new habit is the impossibility of characterizing the 1915 events as genocide if one sticks to the valid definition of the crime of genocide stated in the 1948 Genocide Convention. Yet referring to Lemkin is not spineless. Firstly, the definition of the crime of genocide that was proposed by Lemkin and the definition of the same crime finally approved by the UN in the 1948 Genocide Convention are quite different. Hence, Lemkin’s definition can only be regarded as a draft, not the final definition. What is more problematic for the lobbyists and the Representatives in the House is that Lemkin in his ‘Introduction to the Study of Genocide,’ an unpublished book that was made available to the researchers by Steven Leonard Jacobs under the title ‘Lemkin on Genocide’ in 2012 mentions sixty-two cases of genocide in history, forty-one of which took place in modern times. The ninth genocide in the list of the modern genocides is the ‘genocide by the Greeks against the Turks.’ Lemkin also includes the ‘genocide against the American Indians.’ He provides a ninety-eight-page-long assessment of the ‘genocide against the American Indians’ in this study. As such, if we have to take Lemkin’s studies as the reference point to decide which events in history have been genocides, we need to recognize the ‘Turkish Genocide’ perpetrated by the Greeks along with the ‘genocide of the American Indians.’ Would Armenian lobbyists, their Greek comrades in arms or the Representatives in the House welcome such a move? Not, really.

Fourthly, the preamble of resolutions refers to Adolf Hitler’s alleged words ‘[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?’ by which he set the stage for the Holocaust. Sincerely, sometimes commenting on this and similar claims feels like *Déjà vu* occurring over and over again. Yet there is no way other than

repeating here once again what has been repeated so many times before. The allegation about Hitler's words on the 'forgotten annihilation of the Armenians' was investigated during the Nuremberg Trials and the judges ruled that the factuality of this statement could not be verified. The judges, accordingly, dismissed that these alleged words could be used as evidence during the trials. Is there anything more that is necessary to say on this allegation?

Lastly, how disappointing for the Armenian lobbyists that Steve Cohen, few days after the passage of the genocide resolution, the Democratic Party representative of Tennessee said 'I've always opposed the Armenian resolution, and I voted for it this week. I voted for it because Turkey doesn't seem to respect the United States at all.' This is an obvious verification of the motives of the Representatives in the House, while voting for the genocide resolution. How deplorable for the Armenian lobbyist that their great cause is after all just a political tool for the American lawmakers to punish Turkey whenever relations between the two countries get intense."⁶⁰

The US Senate adopted a resolution on 12 December, identical to House Resolution 296, repeating the same bias and fallacies.

This was also most welcome by Armenian official and religious circles.

Prime Minister Pashinyan thanked the US Congress on 13 December for recognizing the "1915 Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey" adding that adopted resolutions will help to reduce "Turkish threat to Armenia's security".

In a following address to government officials in Yerevan, he said "For us, international recognition of the Armenian genocide also has a security component. This process is important in terms of ensuring the security of our country and people. The international community should express a clear position on Turkey's actions and also encourage Turkey to reappraise and reconsider its role in our region."⁶¹

In response to these developments, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey adopted the following resolution on 13 December:

60 AVİM, "America On The Wane: The House Of Representatives Disgraces Itself and Loses Credibility," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Commentary No: 2019/60, December 4, 2019, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/AMERICA-ON-THE-WANE-THE-HOUSE-OF-REPRESENTATIVES-DISGRACES-ITSELF-AND-LOSES-CREDIBILITY>

61 Sargis Harutyunyan, "Pashinian Blasts Turkey, Hails U.S. Recognition Of Armenian Genocide," *Azattyun.am*, December 13, 2019, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/30323998.html>

“As the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, we strongly condemn and reject the resolution regarding the Armenian genocide claims approved by the US Senate by means of distorting historical facts and disregarding the fundamental rules of international law.

This resolution, which has no legal significance and will not be binding to the Senate after the following election period, is clearly part of a dirty political machination. This constitutes a worthless posture on the interpretation of history based on the petty interests of arbitrary and daily politics.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey reiterates the standpoint that delivering judgements on historical events is not the duty of parliaments. The so-called Armenian genocide draft resolution had previously been brought to the US Senate many times and had been rejected. It is worth noting that whenever the US’ interests come into conflict with Turkey’s politics, this subject is brought to the Senate’s agenda. Fundamentally, the issue here is not the 1915 events, and in truth, the US Senate does not in any way care about either the Armenians or historical events. If Turkey develops policies favorable to the US’ demands and not according to our Noble People’s will, neither the Armenians nor the 1915 events would be brought to the US Senate’s agenda.

Turkey’s stance regarding this subject is clear and obvious: If historical facts are earnestly of interest and deemed important, scholars can inform the world opinion on these facts with reliable research. Turkey has opened her rich archives to all researchers, including the Armenians; however, the archives of Armenia have not been opened, even to the most prominent researchers. Deferring to black propaganda and racist approaches by hiding information and documents is not befitting of any parliament, including the US Senate.

We feel great sorrow due to the strategic alliance and friendship between Turkey and the US of many years being harmed by and made into the subject of nefarious calculations. The US Senate must now live with the burden of this guilty conscience that it has added to its own history.

Paying no heed to this resolution of the US Senate or similar tools of pressure, Turkey will, with determination, continue to protect its national interests and security in its region.

This resolution of the US Senate, in terms of history and law, is deemed null and void by our Noble People and peoples of the world with reason, conscience, and fairness.

We announce to the public opinion that we express our people's common determination and solidarity against this resolution and that it a natural right for Turkey to give the necessary response within the framework of international reciprocity.

With these thoughts, it has been approved by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey General Assembly's 32nd Session dated 13 December 2019 that the US Senate's aforementioned resolution is fully condemned, rejected, and declared null and void and that this resolution of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey is to be published in the Official Gazette."⁶²

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan also made a statement assessing the US Senate resolution as biased and without legal justification.

Another official response to the US Senate resolution came from the US Department of State, stating that "The position of the Administration has not changed. Our views are reflected in the President's definitive statement on this issue from last April".

On 8 November, the Armenian press gave a wide coverage to the initiative of a representative of Armenian descent at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to recognize the "genocide".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia published a statement on 19 November harshly criticizing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statements regarding the Armenian relocation and resettlement during his visit to the US and accused him of attempting to justify the "genocide".

In an interview with an Italian newspaper on 25 November, Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan repeated the well-known discourse and claims:

"Armenia is ready to restore diplomatic relations with Turkey without any preconditions. The international recognitions of the Armenian genocide are not a precondition for us to restore diplomatic relations

62 "Resolution On The Condemnation And Rejection Of The United States Of America Senate Resolution And Declaration Of The Said Resolution Being Deemed Null And Void," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Daily Bulletin, December 20, 2019, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Bulten/RESOLUTION-ON-THE-CONDEMNATION-AND-REJECTION-OF-THE-UNITED-STATES-OF-AMERICA-SENATE-RESOLUTION-AND-DECLARATION-OF-THE-SAID-RESOLUTION-BEING-DEEMED-NULL-AND-VOID>

with Turkey. That recognition is a very important process, which is necessary not for our relations with them, but for the global prevention of genocides. The passage of the resolution in the US House of Representatives recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide is very, very important. It helps to prevent possible future genocides and this decision can change the atmosphere in our region. Those are messages, showing that such aggressive policies will not be accepted by the international community. Unfortunately, a century after the genocide, Turkey is still perceived by Armenians as a possible security threat. It's nearly 30 years the border with Turkey is been closed on their initiative, not ours."⁶³

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu, who gave a written response to a question regarding Turkey-Armenia relations at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 27 November, highlighted that there is no change in the desire for the normalization of the relation with Armenia, that it is essential to take steps towards the resolution of the Karabakh issue for the normalization efforts in the relations to gain ground. Minister Çavuşoğlu underlined that Pashinyan's "Karabakh is Armenia" discourse during his speech in the occupied Hankendi on 5 August is among the indicators that Armenia has begun distancing itself from a peaceful resolution, likewise, that Prime Minister Pashinyan had the audacity to state "Turkey is a serious threat to Armenia" during his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly. Minister Çavuşoğlu recalled that Armenia continues to make baseless claims targeting Turkey regarding the subject of the 1915 events, that they left the call to establish a Joint History Commission for the researching of the aforementioned events unanswered. Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that, despite all of this, if the Armenian side begins to take concrete and sincere steps towards the resolution of the Karabakh conflict with a new attitude within the framework of the international community's expectations and international law, Turkey will respond positively.⁶⁴

On 9 December, Pashinyan had a working meeting with President A. Sarkissian where they "commemorated the memory of all genocide victims and discussed the fact that international recognition of the Armenian genocide is not only a matter of historical fact and justice for us but also our important contribution to global genocide prevention."

63 "Nikol Pashinyan Interviewed by Italy's Biggest Newspaper: Il Corriere Della Sera," *Hyetert*, November 26, 2019, <https://hyetert.org/2019/11/26/nikol-pashinyan-interviewed-by-italys-biggest-newspaper-il-corriere-della-sera/>

64 "Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerini değerlendiren Çavuşoğlu: 'Masadan kalkan taraf Türkiye olmamıştır'," *Sputnik Türkiye*, 26 Kasım 2019, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/columnists/201911261040703880-turkiye-ermenistan-iliskilerini-degerlendiren-cavusoglu-masadan-kalkan-taraf-turkiye-olmamistir/>

In that vein, the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced “the need for international recognition of the Ottoman-era genocide of Greek Christians” and slammed Turkey for “its bellicosity in its maritime foreign policy in the Mediterranean” in his talk at the International Conference on the Crime of Genocide.

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